

IV. TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS

This section presents information on the number and characteristics of persons who come to the United States on a temporary basis (nonimmigrants), including parolees—persons allowed temporary entrance under special circumstances.

Nonimmigrants

A nonimmigrant is an alien admitted to the United States for a specified purpose and temporary period but not for permanent residence.

(See Appendix 3, p. A.3-8.)

Although the typical nonimmigrant is a tourist who visits for a few days to several months, there are numerous classes of nonimmigrant admission, ranging from students to ambassadors. More than 30.1 million nonimmigrant admissions were counted during fiscal year 1998—the largest number of nonimmigrant admissions to the United

States in any year. This represents an increase of more than 5.3 million since 1996—an annual average increase of 10.2 percent between 1996 and 1998.¹

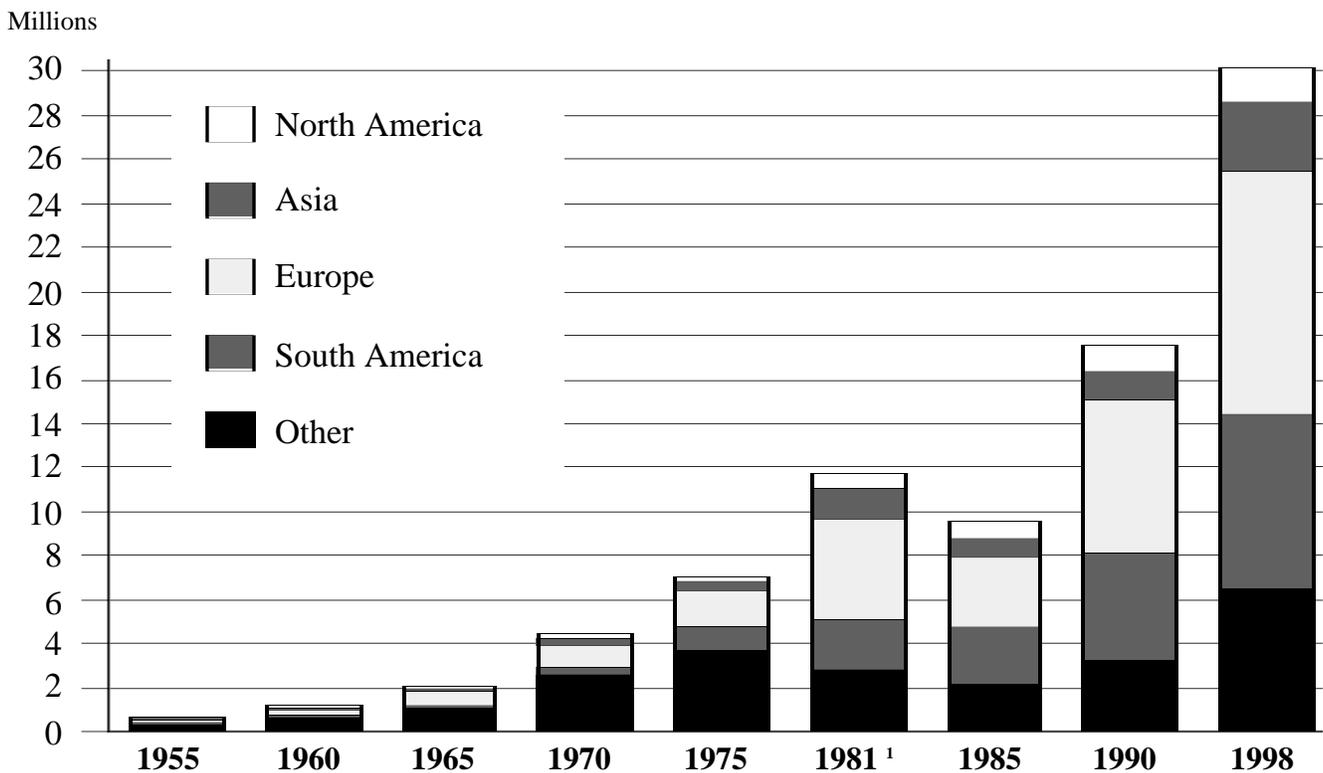
U.S. Nonimmigrant Program

Nonimmigrants were first defined in the Immigration Act of 1819, but the Act of 1855 was the first to require the reporting of “temporary arrivals” separately. The Act of 1924 defined several classes of admission that have been expanded in subsequent legislation. Though “tourists”

¹ No reliable data are available for 1997.

Chart E

Nonimmigrants Admitted by Region of Last Residence: Selected Fiscal Years 1955-98



¹ No data available for 1980. NOTE: See Glossary for fiscal year definitions. Source: 1981, 1985, 1990, and 1998, Table 37; 1955-75, previous Yearbooks.

(temporary visitors for pleasure) have consistently been by far the most numerous nonimmigrant class of admission to the United States, a wide variety of temporary visitors now fall within the nonimmigrant classification. Second in volume to tourists are business people coming to the United States to engage in commercial transactions (though not for employment in this country).

Nonimmigrant categories (Tables 37, 38, 39, 40, 43) Other categories of admission make up a much smaller share of the nonimmigrant total, such as foreign students and temporary workers. Temporary workers are admitted to the United States with "specialty occupations" (such as computer systems analysts and programmers) or to perform temporary services or labor when persons

Table D
Nonimmigrants Admitted Under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program by Country of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1996 and 1998

Country of citizenship	Visitors for pleasure				Visitors for business			
	1998	1996	Change		1998	1996	Change	
			Number	Percent ¹			Number	Percent ¹
All countries	13,833,078	11,192,978	2,640,100	11.2	1,959,552	1,370,452	589,100	19.6
Japan	4,688,151	3,957,111	731,040	8.8	310,158	269,301	40,857	7.3
United Kingdom	3,233,208	2,339,934	893,274	17.5	524,090	363,418	160,672	20.1
Germany	1,576,709	1,511,562	65,147	2.1	261,221	176,506	84,715	21.7
France	864,863	820,829	44,034	2.6	185,310	138,319	46,991	15.7
Italy	581,150	487,584	93,566	9.2	105,422	73,225	32,197	20.0
Netherlands	424,547	361,509	63,038	8.4	113,536	79,877	33,659	19.2
Australia ²	345,273	25,922	319,351	X	73,342	4,906	68,436	X
Spain	284,238	258,763	25,475	4.8	41,336	29,698	11,638	18.0
Argentina ²	282,639	25,877	256,762	X	17,968	1,518	16,450	X
Switzerland	275,225	260,583	14,642	2.8	37,318	25,480	11,838	21.0
Sweden	204,501	156,479	48,022	14.3	70,564	52,687	17,877	15.7
Ireland	202,617	125,953	76,664	26.8	27,627	13,259	14,368	44.3
Belgium	159,393	155,183	4,210	1.3	47,278	33,377	13,901	19.0
Austria	155,928	140,647	15,281	5.3	23,631	13,482	10,149	32.4
New Zealand	125,258	102,929	22,329	10.3	18,456	12,877	5,579	19.7
Denmark	99,950	80,998	18,952	11.1	31,851	22,046	9,805	20.2
Norway	97,217	70,366	26,851	17.5	31,076	20,777	10,299	22.3
Finland	56,188	48,190	7,998	8.0	22,753	15,091	7,662	22.8
Iceland	16,803	11,664	5,139	20.0	2,362	1,541	821	23.8
Luxembourg	11,081	10,338	743	3.5	1,189	793	396	22.4
Slovenia ³	9,335	X	X	X	2,208	X	X	X
Liechtenstein	1,205	950	255	12.6	138	67	71	43.5
Brunei	547	606	-59	-5.0	120	120	-	-
Andorra	543	531	12	1.1	45	44	1	1.1
Monaco	506	478	28	2.9	53	23	30	51.8
San Marino	494	364	130	16.5	33	36	-3	-4.3
Unknown	135,509	237,628	-102,119	-24.5	10,467	21,984	-11,517	-31.0

¹ Average annual percent change, 1996-98. ² Admitted July 1996. ³ Admitted September 30, 1997; entries began during fiscal year 1998.

NOTE: Data include entries under the Guam Visa Waiver Program. No reliable data available for 1997.

- Represents zero. X Not applicable.

capable of performing such services or labor cannot be found in this country (such as agricultural laborers). Others who are granted authorization to work temporarily in the United States include: exchange visitors who enter to study, teach, or conduct research; intracompany transferees, to render managerial or executive services in the United States to international firms or corporations; and industrial trainees. Though not strictly considered as employed in the United States, treaty traders and treaty investors enter temporarily to conduct trade or to invest substantially in enterprises under the provisions of treaties of commerce and navigation between the United States and foreign states.

Nonimmigrants also include several types of temporary visitors who are connected in some way with a foreign government or who represent an international organization. Ambassadors, public ministers, diplomats, and consular officers serve temporarily in this country, bringing with them members of their immediate families as well as personal employees, attendants, and servants. Officers and employees of international organizations such as the United Nations add to the list of nonimmigrant visitors entering the United States each year. The Glossary contains a detailed definition of nonimmigrants, a listing of each of the nonimmigrant classes of admission, and a detailed definition of each class.

Admission policy

The U.S. government has an “open door” policy for most nonimmigrant classes of admission. There are no restrictions on the total number of admissions each year; indeed, tourists (the majority of nonimmigrants) are encouraged to visit as a boon to the U.S. economy. Regulations govern such areas as the grounds for nonimmigrant admission, length and extension of stay, employment in the United States, accompaniment by family members, travel restrictions within the United States, and change of admission status. For example, ambassadors are allowed to remain in the United States for the duration of their service, students to complete their studies, visitors for business for a maximum of 6 months (plus 6-month extensions), and aliens in transit through the United States for not more than 29 days (with no extensions).

Employment (Tables 38, 39, 40, 43) family members

Most types of nonimmigrants are not allowed employment while in the United States, though exceptions may be granted, for example to students and to family members of international representatives. On the other hand, temporary workers come to the United States expressly for purposes of employment. Most nonimmigrant aliens may bring immediate family members with them; the exception is transit aliens other than foreign government officials.

Transit aliens, crewmen, certain exchange visitors, Visa Waiver Pilot Program visitors, fiance(e)s coming to the United States to marry U.S. citizens, and visitors under a special program to provide certain critical information to Federal or State courts are the nonimmigrants who are prohibited from changing to another nonimmigrant category while in this country.

Visa Waiver Pilot Program (Table 39)

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-19) authorized the establishment of a pilot program that permitted certain nonimmigrants from qualified countries to enter the United States on a temporary basis without nonimmigrant visas. The Visa Waiver Pilot Program (see Appendix 3, p. A.3-14) was originally extended only to approved countries that offered a reciprocal waiver of visas to U.S. citizens. The program is limited to admissions in the visitor for pleasure and for business classes of admission, with admission not to exceed 90 days. The Immigration Act of 1990 (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-20-21) revised the Visa Waiver Pilot Program and extended it through fiscal year 1994; subsequent legislation has further extended the program into fiscal year 2000. To date, 26 countries are members of the Visa Waiver Pilot Program. Entries for fiscal year 1996 and 1998 are shown in Table D for current participant countries.

Country of citizenship	Visitors to Guam, FY 1998	
	For pleasure	For business
Total	41,049	876
Korea	20,441	315
Taiwan	15,480	146
Hong Kong	2,399	51
United Kingdom ¹	1,099	29
Nauru	532	10
Japan	288	2
Australia	151	31
Indonesia	130	10
Singapore	77	24
Malaysia	51	9
Papua New Guinea ...	26	1
New Zealand	13	2
Solomon Islands	12	1
Burma	6	-
Samoa	5	1
Vanuatu	-	-
Brunei	-	-
Unknown	339	244

¹ Excludes Hong Kong. - Represents zero.

Guam Visa Waiver Pilot Program

Under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, certain visitors from designated countries may visit Guam for up to 15 days without first having to obtain nonimmigrant visitor visas. The table above shows the countries participating in this program and entries for fiscal year 1998.

North American Free-Trade Agreement

(Tables 38, 39, 40, 43)

In December 1992, the Presidents of the United States and Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada signed an agreement, enacted in December 1993, known as the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA). (See Appendix 1, p. A.1-22.) This law superseded the United States-Canada Free-Trade Agreement, establishing a special, reciprocal trading relationship among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This agreement extended to the citizens of Mexico (with certain stipulations) and Canada the nonimmigrant class of admission exclusively for business people entering the United States to engage in activities at a "professional" level. Additionally, the agreement facilitates entry for Mexican as well as Canadian citizens seeking temporary entry as visitors for business, treaty traders and investors, and intracompany transferees. Entries under NAFTA began in February 1994. Data for fiscal year 1998 are shown for both NAFTA and the United States-Canada Free-Trade Agreement in Table 39.

**A record 30.1 million
nonimmigrants were admitted
to the United States during 1998.**

Data Overview

Recent trends in admission (Tables 37, 39)

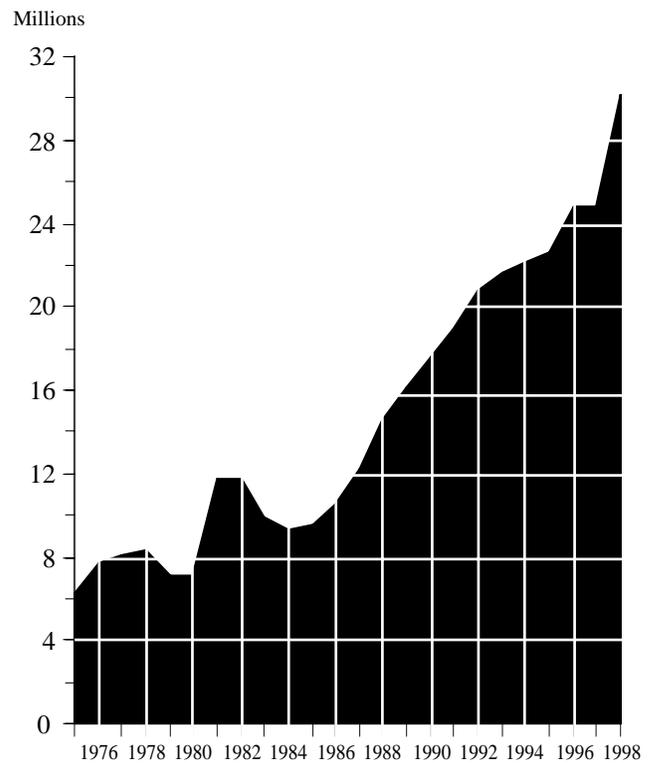
As noted, the 1998 total of more than 30.1 million nonimmigrant arrivals represents an increase of more than 5.3 million (10.2 percent annual average) from fiscal year 1996. Total nonimmigrant admissions numbered about 6.3 million during 1975 and steadily increased to about 11.8 million in both 1981 and 1982. The number stabilized at about 9.5 million from 1983 to 1985 (recording a low in 1984) then began a steady increase that continued from 1985 to 1998 (Chart F).

Class of admission (Tables 37, 38, 39, 40, 43)

Of the more than 30.1 million nonimmigrants who arrived in fiscal year 1998, a large majority (77.1 percent) entered as visitors for pleasure (tourists), with the next highest class of admission, temporary visitors for business, accounting for 14.6 percent. Nearly 251,000 persons entered as

Chart F

Nonimmigrants Admitted: Fiscal Years 1975-98



NOTE: Data estimated for last quarter of 1979 and no data available for 1980 and 1997. See Glossary for fiscal year definitions.
Source: Table 37 and previous Yearbooks.

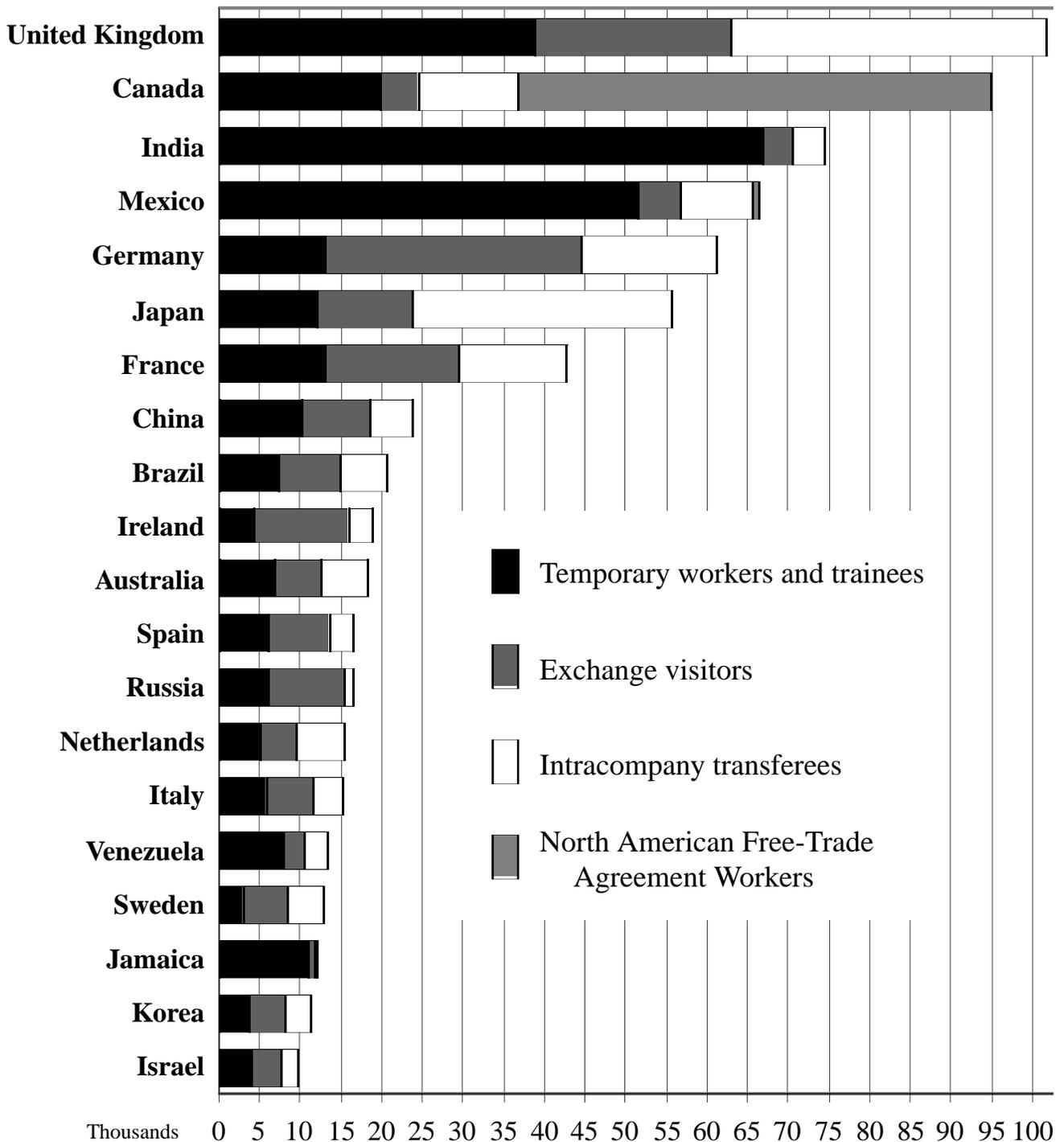
exchange visitors to study, teach, or conduct research in the United States, bringing with them some 42,000 spouses and children (Chart G). Nearly 565,000 foreign students entered the United States to pursue a full course of study (predominantly in academic institutions) accompanied by almost 34,000 spouses and children (Chart H).

More than 225,000 representatives of foreign governments (less than 1 percent of total entries) entered the United States as nonimmigrants in 1998. This figure consists of: nearly 127,000 foreign government officials (including ambassadors, public ministers, career diplomats, and consular officers), family members, and attendants; more than 86,000 foreign representatives to international organizations (including families and attendants); and more than 12,000 officials serving the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (including family members).

Country of citizenship (Tables 38, 40, 41, 42, 44)

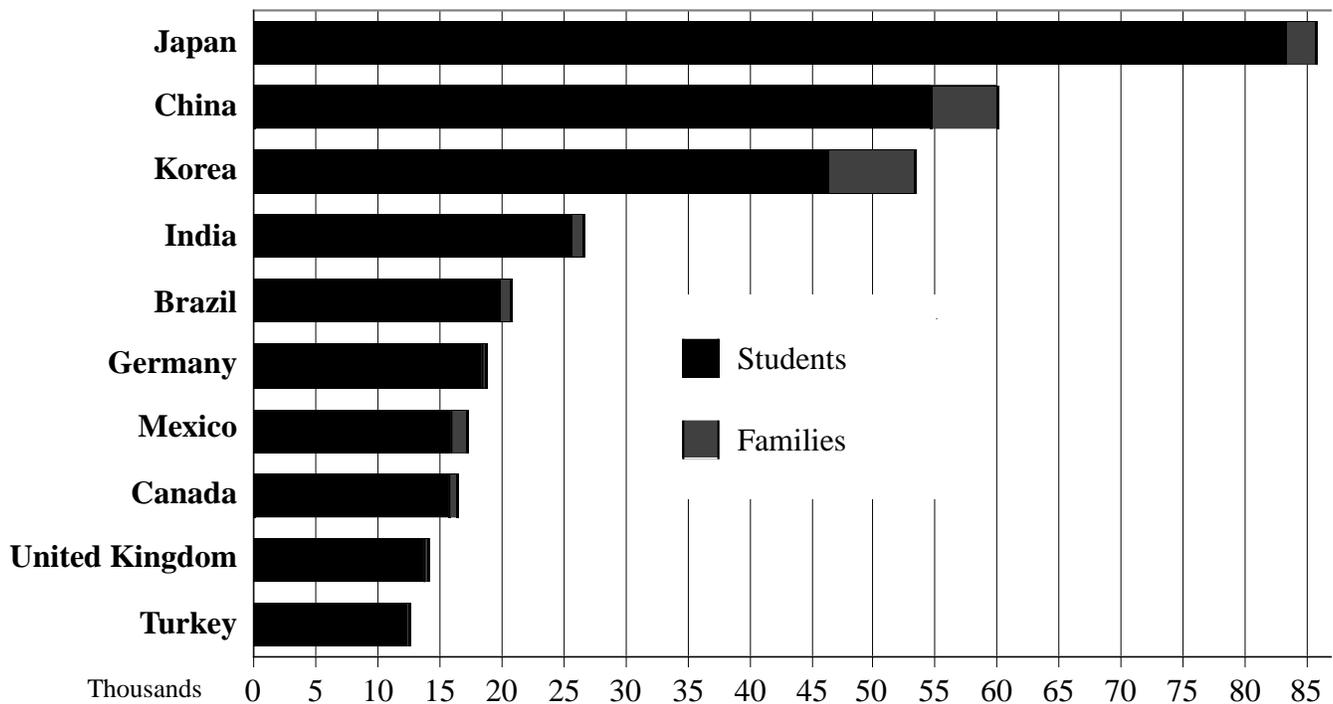
Half of all nonimmigrants arriving in 1998 were citizens of one of four countries: Japan (17.5 percent), the United Kingdom (14.0), Mexico (11.6), and Germany (7.0). Tourists far outnumbered other classes of entry for almost every country of citizenship (Chart I). Eighty-nine percent of Japanese nonimmigrants were tourists (visitors for pleasure),

Chart G
Nonimmigrants Admitted as Temporary Workers, Intracompany Transferees, and Exchange Visitors from Top Twenty Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 1998



NOTE: China includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan. "Temporary workers and trainees" includes admission classes H, O, P, Q, and R (see Nonimmigrant Admission section of text). Also, see Glossary for definitions of nonimmigrant classes of admission. Source: Table 40.

Chart H
Nonimmigrants Admitted as Students and Their Families for Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 1998



NOTE: China includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Source: Table 38.

compared to 76 percent of citizens of France, and 54 percent of Chinese (People's Republic of China and Taiwan).

Port of entry (Table 41)

Just as four countries dominated nonimmigrant admissions to the United States in 1998, so did four ports of entry. Miami (14.4 percent), New York (13.5), Los Angeles (11.0), and Honolulu (7.4) together accounted for more than 46 percent of all entrants. The share of all four ports decreased in 1998, indicating a general dispersement of arrival to other ports within the United States since 1996.

State of intended residence (Tables 43, 44)

Similar to ports of entry, four states were most often the intended destination of temporary visitors to the United States: Florida (18.1 percent of total admissions, nearly one quarter of that from the United Kingdom), California (13.9 percent of the total, 17.4 percent from Japan), New York (12.5 percent of the total, 15.6 percent from the United Kingdom), and Hawaii (7.0 percent of the total, 85.5 percent from Japan).

Parolees

A parolee is an alien, appearing to be inadmissible to the inspecting officer, allowed to enter the United States under urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit.

(See Appendix 3, p. A.3-9.)

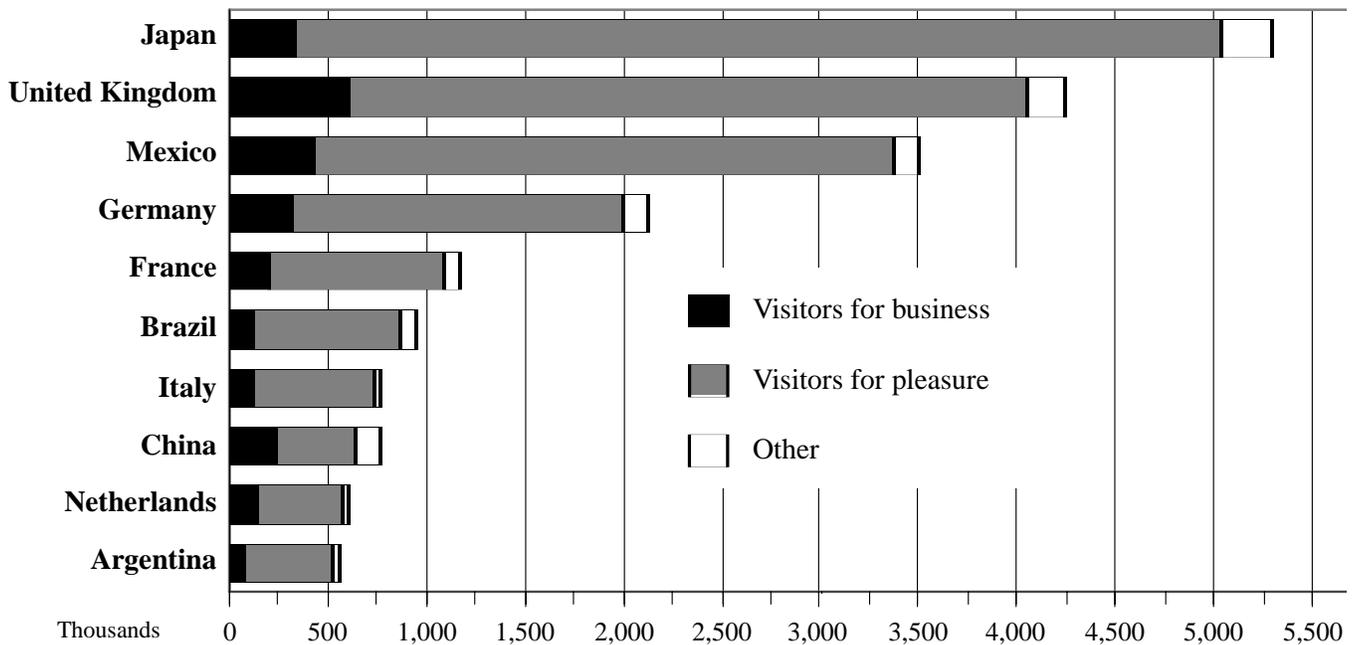
Authority to grant parole

The Attorney General has the authority to allow the temporary admission of an alien on a case-by-case basis who may appear inadmissible but who enters the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit. Parole does not constitute formal admission to the United States. It confers only temporary status, and parolees are required to leave when the conditions supporting their admission are ended.

U.S. Parole Program

Parolees are treated as nonimmigrants, but their numbers are not reported in the nonimmigrant admission data

Chart I
Nonimmigrants Admitted by Selected Class of Admission from Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 1998



NOTE: China includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Source: Table 38.

(Tables 37-44). They are usually classified into three main categories: deferred inspections; port-of-entry/district advance parolees; and humanitarian/public interest/overseas parolees. In recent years, more than 100,000 parole admissions have been authorized annually, and in fiscal year 1998 the number exceeded 200,000.

Categories of parole

Deferred inspection is used when an alien does not appear to be clearly admissible based on the evidence at hand. The parole is issued and an appointment is made for the alien to appear at another INS office, where more information is available and the inspection can be completed. These cases are usually resolved within 2 weeks, and the alien is admitted in the appropriate category. Deferred inspection has also been used to admit people in special situations. For example, in fiscal years 1993 and 1994 combined, more than 12,000 nationals of El Salvador were admitted under deferred inspection. Many of them were members of the ABC class (see Asylum section) admitted to file or renew claims for asylum. By 1998 only 199 Salvadorans were given deferred inspection. Parole may also be granted by advance arrangement with an INS District Office or, more commonly, at a port of

entry. These admissions comprised more than 75 percent of all paroles in fiscal year 1998. These cases are most common at the land border ports and often involve the reentry of permanent resident aliens who are not carrying their documents. Again, these cases are typically resolved rapidly when the documents are produced.

More than 234,000 parolees were admitted to the United States during 1998.

The more exceptional instances of parole arise in emergencies or special situations. People may be admitted to receive medical treatment or because they are injured or acutely ill. They may be brought to the United States to take part in legal proceedings as witnesses or defendants, or as part of a special overseas program undertaken in an agreement with another government. The latter category is the only one that may constitute a long-term admission to the United States.

Table E
Parolees Admitted by Selected Class of Admission from Top Five Countries of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1993-98

Class of admission/ Country of citizenship	1993	1994	1995	1996	1998
All parolees	123,490	111,403	113,542	133,503	234,545
Deferred inspections	27,819	23,742	9,311	7,952	10,108
Mexico	6,340	6,255	1,742	1,630	1,786
Canada	1,017	884	670	452	822
United Kingdom	686	555	404	463	480
Jamaica	169	237	193	185	361
Colombia	201	209	230	211	348
Other	19,406	15,602	6,072	5,011	6,311
Port-of-entry & district advance parolees	63,348	58,824	61,019	95,415	177,701
Mexico	11,548	11,761	15,182	21,488	57,019
Canada	3,288	2,754	3,695	6,406	13,219
United Kingdom	2,195	1,918	2,456	5,371	9,348
China ¹	5,344	3,845	3,156	4,950	8,962
India	2,066	1,918	1,737	3,443	6,188
Other	38,907	36,628	34,793	53,757	82,965
Humanitarian, public interest, and overseas parolees	32,323	28,837	43,212	30,136	46,736
Mexico	5,068	4,974	3,454	2,539	21,476
Cuba	3,220	9,149	28,139	17,463	13,888
Canada	1,677	1,807	2,039	1,972	2,376
Soviet Union, former	2,270	1,909	1,697	1,143	2,281
Vietnam	7,585	4,824	1,477	270	532
Other	12,503	6,174	6,406	6,749	6,183

¹ Includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Note: No reliable data available for 1997.

Country of citizenship

Table E displays the total number of parolees admitted from fiscal year 1993 through fiscal year 1998 by the three major categories of parole. Within each category, the five countries accounting for the largest number of parole admissions in fiscal year 1998 are shown. Our neighboring countries, Canada and Mexico, account for the largest number of parolees in the deferred inspections and port-of-entry/district advance categories. Parolees from the United Kingdom are the third most common in those categories. More than half of the increase in this category between 1996 and 1998 was due to the increase for Canada and Mexico alone.

Table F presents more detail for the same years regarding admissions under the overseas, humanitarian, and public interest parole categories. The annual numbers admitted have fluctuated according to the operations of the special overseas programs that account for many of the admissions in this category. Beginning in 1994 and continuing through 1998, the largest number of overseas parolees

were Cubans admitted under the 1994 migration agreement with Cuba. Most of the parolees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and the former Soviet Union arrived under special legislation after being denied refugee status.² These persons are allowed to adjust to immigrant status after one year of residence in the United States. As the declining numbers from these countries show, these admissions are waning.

A large proportion of the humanitarian parolees admitted annually for medical and related reasons are from Canada and Mexico, and the increase in this category between 1996 and 1998 was due entirely to the increase in parolees from Mexico. The rest come in small numbers from many other countries. Similarly, most of the annual admissions under public interest parole for legal and related reasons are from Canada and Mexico, and the increase again can be attributed to parole admissions from Mexico.

² The Foreign Operations Act of November 21, 1989 (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-20). This provision is commonly known as the Lautenberg Amendment.

Table F
Parolees Admitted by Selected Category of Parole from Selected
Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Years 1993-98

Category of admission/ Country of citizenship	1993	1994	1995	1996	1998
All selected parole categories	32,323	28,837	43,212	30,136	46,736
Overseas parolees & special programs ¹	16,901	16,471	32,262	19,181	17,221
Cuba	3,220	9,149	28,139	17,463	13,888
Soviet Union, former	2,270	1,909	1,697	1,143	2,281
Vietnam	7,585	4,824	1,477	270	532
Cambodia	726	94	57	25	64
Haiti	3,005	212	415	96	54
Other	95	283	477	184	402
Humanitarian parolees (medical and related reasons)	10,128	10,335	8,878	8,836	24,491
Land border countries:					
Mexico	4,265	4,290	2,922	2,184	18,292
Canada	1,177	1,295	1,369	1,377	1,802
Other countries:					
El Salvador	146	165	172	833	742
China ²	307	390	277	343	269
United Kingdom	216	132	198	226	224
India	209	344	259	276	206
Philippines	294	210	185	147	199
Pakistan	218	472	433	516	140
Other	3,296	3,037	3,063	2,934	2,617
Public interest parolees (legal and related reasons)	5,294	2,031	2,072	2,119	5,024
Land border countries:					
Mexico	796	628	489	338	3,092
Canada	499	482	612	588	543
Other countries	3,999	921	971	1,193	1,389

¹ Includes parole authorized by an INS overseas office and persons from the same countries with other humanitarian parole codes. ² Includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Note: No reliable data available for 1997.

Understanding the Data

Data Collection

The Nonimmigrant Information System (NIIS) is designed to provide for each nonimmigrant a record of legal admission and departure. The system also produces statistics for such variables as age, country of citizenship, class of admission, visa-issuing post, port of entry, and destination in the United States. Many nonimmigrants enter and leave the United States more than once each year and the NIIS system records each entry separately.

A description of the principal steps in the process of nonimmigrant admission to the United States is useful for

understanding the data produced by the NIIS system. A nonimmigrant visa is secured at a U.S. Consulate abroad (except for those entering under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program—see Nonimmigrant Admission section). These visas may be valid for multiple visits to the United States. Prior to departing for the United States, nonimmigrants are screened initially by the transportation company to insure that their documents are in order. During the trip, INS Form I-94 is distributed to non-U.S. citizens.

At the port of entry, each arriving nonimmigrant presents a visa, which usually is stamped in the passport, and a completed Form I-94 to an immigration inspector. Among other actions, the inspector checks the form for completeness, determines the length of admission, and

stamps the class of admission and port of entry on the form. The arrival portion is torn off and sent to a central data processing facility. The matching departure section of the form, usually stapled into the passport, is the nonimmigrant's proof of legal admission to the United States. This section of Form I-94, collected at departure, also is sent to the data processing facility where it is processed and matched electronically to the arrival section of the form.

Other temporary visitors

The Nonimmigrant Information System also includes information on parolees (*e.g.*, entering for humanitarian, medical, or legal reasons), withdrawals, stowaways, deferred inspections (allowed to enter to appear at an INS office where formal inspection can be completed), and refugees. Data for these classes of admission are not shown in the nonimmigrant tables but are included in summary form in footnotes to the appropriate tables. Additionally, refugee data are shown in the Refugee section and parolee data in the Parolee section of the text and tables.

Temporary visitor information not collected

The Nonimmigrant Information System also does not include data for permanent resident aliens returning after short visits abroad or for most of the millions of citizens of Canada and Mexico who cross the border for brief periods of time. Most aliens entering the United States from Canada or Mexico do not require documentation in the NIIS system. Canadians may travel for business or pleasure without travel restrictions for a period of 6 months without obtaining nonimmigrant visas. Mexicans crossing the border frequently may apply for border crossing cards, which can be used for admission to the United States for business or pleasure within 25 miles of the Southwestern border for a period not to exceed 72 hours.

Limitations of Data

A new data system was developed and put into place in mid-1996. While the new system introduced needed improvements in many of the data processing functions, start-up difficulties have led to less complete capture of

some data items for fiscal year 1996, such as port of entry and state of intended residence. The detailed tables have been appropriately footnoted, citing "processing errors" for the increased number of "unknown" for certain variables. While the total number of nonimmigrant admissions has not been affected, caution must be exercised in interpreting the data. As noted, data for fiscal year 1997 do not appear in this edition due to data inconsistencies resulting from the reengineering of both the data entry and data base management components of the Nonimmigrant Information System.

As mentioned, the data system records arrivals via collection of INS Form I-94; thus, data represent each arrival event during the year rather than the actual number of individuals admitted. Nonimmigrants in several classes of admission, often enter (and leave) many times in any given year, especially students, intracompany transferees, and visitors for business.

Changes in the procedures for processing student records, whereby certain records were prematurely moved off-line and subsequently not included in annual totals, resulted in a substantial underreporting in the number of student arrivals for 1991 through 1993. These procedures have been revised and new student arrival figures developed for these years. Table 39 reflects revised student arrival counts as well as minor differences in numbers for other classes of admission and country of last residence.

The tables on parole admissions in fiscal year 1998 use a later edition of the data than was available for production of the report, *Use of the Attorney General's Parole Authority Under the Immigration and Nationality Act: Fiscal Years 1997-1998*.

Missing information

Finally, there are gaps in the historical nonimmigrant data series due to the unavailability of arrival and departure records for July to September 1979, all of 1980, and for most characteristics for 1981 and 1982. Country of last residence and class of admission are the only variables available for 1981 and 1982. No reliable data are available for 1997.